

POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS, KAMMALANS, ETC.

185

regulation. They said that they were starving and that they had had nothing to eat that morning. When I asked them how they would solve their problem, they replied that it was better that I "did not ask". Evil times had befallen them in their old age, and they really did not know what they could do about it; they might hire themselves out as labourers, if they were not so old and feeble. They agreed with me that the increase in population in Kerala over the years had made the difficulty of feeding so many people increasingly great.

Their two elder sons, called Ayapakuti and Pangha, lived polyandrously, I heard, some few miles away, on a bit of land which their fathers had given them fourteen years ago, in the fifth year of their marriage and after the birth of their fourth child. The common wife, Paru, was now alone with the thirty five year old second son, as the elder had died two years ago, also at the age of thirty five. It seemed that Kandapan had originally been part of the polyandrous household but that, tiring of living in this way, he had found a wife for himself, Lakshmi, with whom he had returned to the parental house to live, after the last renewal of the lease, four years ago.

With the old folk and Kandapan's family, was also Kunyu, a daughter, twenty five years old and divorced ten years ago. She had been married at the age of fourteen to Velahu, a man eighteen years her senior. She was childless and had not remarried. She lived in the larger house with her parents.

I took photographs of the family and a group picture of them can be seen in Fig. 10. I also made their genealogy, which is attached herewith in Table 6. I stayed on and discussed various problems with these people for part of the afternoon (having provided for them to have lunch in the meantime, which was most welcome to them in their starved condition). They told me that even if polyandry was now prohibited since the Act passed in 1940, it had been dying out for some years in any case. The legislation - of which they really had no idea at all - was only the confirmation and the consecration of a *de facto* state of affairs. Concerning the inheritance of girls in Tiya families, I may mention that, since the passing of the Act, property would have to be divided. Girls would also get their share which would be half that of the boys; they would pass it on to their own children and, since they were *makkathayam*, it would become merged with that of the latter's fathers. If there were no boys and only girls in the household, its property would cease to exist after the girls had been married off, for each of them would take her part away in accordance with the above.